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AUTHOR Jeffers, Dennis W.; And Others
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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to determine the perceptions of staff members in the psychiatric treatment division of a residential mental health center regarding the internal communication situation among division employees. The study, which combined organizational communication and basic communication research perspectives, was based both on an examination of the communication climate in the division and on an evaluation of how specific communication roles and functions were being performed. Data were collected through a series of indepth interviews with a sample of division employees and through the completion of self-administered questionnaires by a total of 92 employees (approximately 70% of all employees). Analysis of the data revealed that the employees as a group were not really dissatisfied with the internal communication situation, but that they felt the need for improvement in amount and frequency of communication, communication about change, and staff interaction. Although in general the professional employees were more satisfied than nonprofessionals, there were significant differences on only four communication dimensions. No significant sex differences were noted. Such studies as this one are valuable in revealing both positive and negative aspects of an organization's internal communication situation. (GT)

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Public Relations Division

AN EVALUATION OF THE COMMUNICATIONS CLIMATE AND PERFORMANCE OF COMMUNICATION ROLES AND FUNCTIONS IN A MENTAL HOSPITAL

By

Dennis W. Jeffers, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Department of Journalism
Central Michigan University
Mt. Pleasant, Michigan 48859

Ronald E. Ostman, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Department of Communication Arts
Cornell University
Ithaca, New York 14850

William R. Skelton, M.S.
Supervising Psychologist
Psychiatric Treatment Division
Anna Mental Health and Developmental Center
Anna, Illinois 62906

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Improving employee relations has always been an important part of the public relations practitioner's job.[1] But as society moves into the 1980s, it is apparent that the employee public is going to become even more important. Specifically, communicating with employees is going to become more important. For instance, Fox reports that one of the largest public relations counseling firms finds that it is increasingly working with clients to help improve employee communications because public relations directors have moved this task to the top of their agenda. The public relations directors believe they need to improve employee communication in order to increase employee understanding and cooperation.[2]

Furthermore, following a recent survey of public relations directors of Fortune's top 50 largest companies, Keckly concludes that employee relations and internal communications are directly related and that a cause-effect relationship exists between the ability of management to communicate and the success of any employee relations program.[3]

While effective employee relations and internal communications are important in any organization, they particularly are important in human service organizations such as mental health hospitals and centers. In a nationwide study of mental hospitals to determine components of organizational effectiveness, Smith and King measured the amount and frequency of communication among staff of various departments within hospitals. They found that frequency of communication among nursing personnel appears to be a critical component of high quality patient care, that frequent communication to supportive sub-units is negatively related to the presence of organizational conflict and that good communication by staff leads to better patient in-community adjustment. Furthermore, they found that a clear correlate of staff morale is the receipt

of information from the administrative unit of the hospital.[4] In other words, good internal communication is crucial for the effective operation of a mental hospital.

However, the gap between recognizing that good internal communication is a necessary ingredient of effective operation and implementing a good internal communications program is often large. The first step in closing that gap is to measure the effectiveness of the existing internal communication in order to identify both the strong and weak aspects of the program. As Grunig points out, measurement (and its subsequent research component) is becoming an ever greater part of public relations.[5] This is especially the case in employee relations as other work by Grunig makes clear.[6]

RESEARCH SETTING AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The results of an internal pilot study of employee job satisfaction conducted in Spring, 1977, by a staff psychologist at the Anna Mental Health and Development Center in Anna, Illinois, indicated that some employees in the Psychiatric Treatment Division of the Center believed there were "communication problems" in the division. Furthermore, some employees believed that these "problems" were having a negative effect on their personal job satisfaction.

In response to these concerns, the Psychiatric Treatment Division administrators requested a study whose focus would be the staff's perceptions of the internal communications between the division's administrators and employees.

The Anna Mental Health and Developmental Center, located in rural southwestern Illinois, is one of 26 such centers in the state designed to treat

patients on a residential basis. While some parts of the Anna facility were built shortly after the Civil War, officials consider the hospital to be above average in terms of facilities, physical plant, equipment, philosophy of the staff and level of funding support.

The patient population consists of approximately 200-250 mentally ill persons (located in the Psychiatric Treatment Division) and approximately 150 developmentally disabled persons (located in the Developmentally Disabled Division). There are approximately 600 professional, para-professionals, clerical and maintenance staff persons working in both divisions of the center.

In the Psychiatric Treatment Division, to which the study was confined, there are six wards to which the residents are assigned. Each ward has its own staff and a ward coordinator who serves as the immediate supervisor on that ward. The ward coordinators report to the division administrators, who in turn report to the central hospital administration. This means that there are three levels of administration with which employees communicate within the center.

Across three shifts on a 24-hour basis there are normally 130-150 staff members distributed throughout the six wards. The classifications of these employees include ward coordinators, nurses, social workers, psychologists, rehabilitation counselors, mental health technicians, housekeepers, activity therapists, mental health specialists and secretary-clerk stenographers. Approximately two-thirds of these employees are female.

While the division administrators initially requested the communication study in response to the job satisfaction survey, two interruptions in the normal operation of the center made the communication study more imperative while at the same time hampering its completion.

The first interruption came in Summer, 1977, when state officials in the Governor's office, responding to a critical shortage of space to house prisoners, began a feasibility study to determine if the center should be converted to a prison. Naturally, this created a "crisis atmosphere" at the center and the preliminary work on the communication study was suspended pending the outcome of the Governor's investigation. Partly in response to an extensive lobbying effort by center employees and citizens in Southern Illinois, the Governor eventually recommended against the conversion to a prison. As operations began to return to normal in late Summer and Fall of 1977 there was a greater realization by all concerned that good internal communication is extremely important and work on the communication study was resumed.

The second interruption came in late Summer 1978 when the researchers were about ready to collect data from the division's employees. A major fire on one of the wards forced the closing of one section of a building and, consequently, the redistribution of all staff and residents onto the five remaining wards. This was accomplished smoothly, but again, the need for good internal communications was highlighted and the study was delayed until operations settled down to normal level.

RESEARCH APPROACH AND MODEL OF COMMUNICATION

Public relations practitioners concerned about communication within organizations such as mental health centers can borrow heavily from the results of studies conducted by organizational communication researchers. As Goldhaber, Yates, Porter and Lesniak point out, organizational communication is a 25-year-old discipline with its own content, methodology and applications.[7]

One specific approach often used by organizational communication researchers calls for an examination of the "communications climate" of an organization. Farace, Monge and Russell say that the "Communications climate can encompass a variety of dimensions . . . including openness, trust, quality of message flow, availability and usefulness of feedback channels, and other concepts that reflect one or another of communication activities in an organization.[8] Goldhaber et al. say that the climate of any organization involves perceptions of the personal relationships and communication within the organization. They add that "the primary components of communication climate involve the degree of understanding, trust, openness, and influence present in the work relationships."[9]

Given the fact that the researchers had little to start with other than the knowledge that some Psychiatric Treatment Division staff members believed "communication problems" existed in the division, the adoption of the "communication climate" perspective seemed most appropriate to study communication within the division. However, the researchers realized that certain communication roles are being played and certain communication functions are being performed in any organization and an effective study of the communications climate of that organization needs to take this into consideration. Consequently, for guidance in identifying these communication roles and functions, the researchers decided to turn to basic communication research. Specifically, the "Conceptual Model for Communications Research" put forth by Westley and MacLean seemed to provide the most utility.[10]

Westley and MacLean intended for their model to be general enough to deal with all levels of human communication--from face-to-face to mass--and as a consequence one version of their model is particularly suitable for identifying communication roles and functions in the organizational environment. This is

their A-B version of the model. (See figure 1) Here, As are considered to be purposive communicators who transmit messages about Xs (which are events, objects and issues in the environment) via channels to Bs, who are the receivers of the messages (and who, consequently, use the messages about events, objects and issues in the environment to solve problems). As Westley and MacLean point out, crucial to the model is the feedback loop. In the version of the model used for this study, fba is the feedback loop.

Using this version of the model we can identify the following communication roles and functions in the Psychiatric Treatment Division environment:

As--The purposive communicators in the division environment are the hospital, division and ward administrators.

Bs--The recipients of the messages from the administrators are the employees in the Psychiatric Treatment Division.

Xs--These are issues, events and objects that the division employees need information about in order to make decisions, solve problems and assess the environment.

Channels--These are the methods by which the administrators transmit messages to the employees.

fba--In this case, the feedback function is considered to be fulfilled by this study. In other words, the results of this study will provide the administrators with information about how their messages affect the employees.

In summary then, the research approach used in this study called for a combination of organizational communication and basic communication research perspectives which resulted in an examination of the communication research perspectives which resulted in an examination of the communication climate of the Psychiatric Treatment Division of the Anna Mental Health and Developmental Center and an evaluation of how specific communication roles and functions are being performed in the environment.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research approach for this study suggested two groups of specific research questions that needed to be answered in order to fulfill the objectives of the study. The first group of research questions was designed to provide information about the quality of the communications climate in the Psychiatric Treatment Division. These questions are:

1. How satisfied are division employees with the accuracy of the communication between administrators and staff?

2. How satisfied are division employees with the amount of the communication between administrators and staff?

3. How satisfied are division employees with the frequency of communication between administrators and staff?

4. How satisfied are division employees with the availability of the communication between administrators and staff?

5. How satisfied are division employees with the degree of importance of communication between administrators and staff?

6. How satisfied are division employees with the degree of apparent effectiveness of communication between administrators and staff?

The second group of research questions was designed to provide information about specific communication roles and functions (as suggested by the Westley-MacLean Model) operating in the Psychiatric Treatment Division. They are:

7. How satisfied are division employees with the communication from administrators regarding salient issues, events and objects in the environment?

8. How satisfied are the division employees with the communication performance by the three types of administrators with which the employee interact--ward, division and hospital?

9. How satisfied are the division employees with the channels of communication used by administrators?

METHODOLOGY

The methodological plan to gather the information necessary to answer the research questions consisted of two major aspects. The first called for a series of in-depth interviews with a selected group of employees and the second called for the distribution of a self-administered questionnaire to a much larger number of employees. Both aspects are explained in detail below.

In-Depth Interviews In late Summer and Fall, 1977, personal interviews, lasting anywhere from 45 minutes to two hours were conducted with a purposive sample of division employees. These included administrators and non-administrators, professional and non-professional employees and male and female employees. There were three objectives of these interviews. First, to give the researchers a better "feel" for the communications situation in the division. Second, to identify the issues, events and objects in the division environment considered salient to employees and, about which, administrators should be purposefully communicating to the staff. Third, to determine the specific channels by which administrators provide messages about these issues to the employees.

The results of the interviews revealed that the issues, objects and events considered salient by division employees could be classified under four different headings. These are:

1. Change--Because of new developments in the mental health field, alterations in mental health codes and other factors, employees felt a real need for information about changes in policies and procedures in the division.

2. Organizational Structure--Employee needs for information in this area centered around the determination of lines of authority on the wards, levels of staffing on the wards and changes in ward structure.

3. Staff Interaction--Here employees were concerned about "isolation" of certain types of staff members, relationships between professional and non-professional staff and the cohesiveness of employees with the same job classifications.

4. Role Confusion--This group of concerns dealt with the employees' needs for information about specific job duties, training and specific role functions within the division.

The personal interviews revealed that the administrators use two per-dominant channels for communicating with the division employees. The first channel consists of written messages in the form of notices, minutes of meetings and announcements for bulletin boards. Also, on each ward there is a log book, which is a written record of activities and events on the ward. All employees are required to check the log book daily and record pertinent information.

The second channel consists of meetings. These include ward staff meetings, ward-patient meetings, shift change meetings and informal meetings between administrators and staff.

Development of the Questionnare Following the completion of the in-depth interviewing, the researchers developed scales consisting of four or five Likert-type statements to measure the degree of employee satisfaction with each of the six communications climate dimensions (accuracy, amount, frequency, availability, effectiveness and importance of communication), each of the four salient issue dimensions (communication about change,

structure, staff interaction and role confusion) and each of the two channel dimensions (written and verbal/meetings). Rather than develop separate scales for the three levels of administration, since each of the above scales required the employee to evaluate statements in light of the performance of a specific type of administrator, reference to the three types (ward, division and hospital) was randomly distributed across the 12 scales.

Althourh the questionnare was designed to be self-administered, the initial version was pre-tested in a series of personal interviews in Spring, 1978 so that researchers could obtain immediate feedback from the respondents regarding misunderstandings or problems caused by statement wording or questionnaire construction.[11]

Following the pre-test, the questionnaire was revised. The final version, which took about 30 minutes to complete, contained 63 statements with response categories that ranged from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." Fifty-two statements related to the 12 scales and 11 of the items were designed to measure employee perceptions of several miscellaneous factors. The items were randomly distributed and half were "positively" worded and half were "negatively" worded in order to minimize any response set. The final version also contained a measure of job satisfaction but the results of that measure are not reported in this paper.[12]

Data Collection Procedure and Description of the Sample In October, 1978, after operations had returned to normal following the fire on one of the wards, the division administrators announced to all employees that the researchers would be at the center on a specific day to administer the questionnaire on a voluntary basis. The purpose of the questionnaire was explained in very general terms and all employees were urged to participate.

On the day of the data collection the researchers were located in an area easily accessible to all the wards and employees were given time off from their duties to participate in the research project. The researchers were available at the center for 17 consecutive hours (8 AM to 1 PM) in order to give employees from all three shifts a chance to participate.

The procedure yielded 92 completed questionnaires--a 70% response rate from all available employees during those three shifts. This was considered an extremely good rate of completion for this type of survey research. One-sample chi-square tests were made to compare the observed demographics with the known characteristics of the employee population on two variables -- sex and occupational position. In neither instance was a statistically significant difference found. The sample is considered to be representative of the total division employee population. The sample included respondents from all wards and in all job classifications. Nearly 50% of the respondents had worked at the center for more than 13 years. The percentages of respondents by job classification and sex and the percentages of all division employees by job classification and sex are presented in Table 1.

Reliability

Reliability coefficients for all scale items were calculated using the Cronbach Alpha formula. The average reliability coefficient for the 12 scales measuring the 12 dimensions was .67. The highest reliability coefficient was for the accuracy scale (.81). Reliability coefficient for the remaining scales were as follows: change, .80; amount, .76; role confusion, .75; meetings, .72; effectiveness, .69; staff interaction, .67; availability, .64; importance, .62; structure and written communication, .57, and frequency, .48. These reliabilities were judged sufficiently high for this study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The data needed to answer the specific research questions can be found in Tables 2 and 3.

Research Questions 1-6 inquire about the communications climate in the division. Table 2 shows that all of the division employees are mildly satisfied with the accuracy, availability and degree of importance of the communication from administrators to staff. The employees are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the effectiveness of the communication but they are clearly somewhat dissatisfied with the frequency and amount of communication between the administration and staff.

Research Question 7 asks about employee satisfaction with communication about salient issues, events and objects in the division environment. These specific issues were identified in the in-depth interviews and Table 2 shows that the employees are mildly satisfied with the communication relating to roles within the division and mildly dissatisfied with communication about structure within the division. It is clear that the employees are not positive in their perceptions of the communication regarding change and staff interaction within the division.

Research Question 8 focuses on the employee perceptions of the communication performance of the different types of administrators. Table 3 illustrates that the level of satisfaction with the administrators decreases as the "distance" between employees and administrators increases. Employees are somewhat satisfied with the performance of their immediate supervisor on the ward, neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the performance of the division

administrators and somewhat dissatisifed with the performance of the hospital administrators.

The last research question deals with channels of communication used by administrators to communicate with employees. Table 2 shows that employees have no major problems with the current channels of communication, although they are more satisfied with the meetings/verbal channel than the written channel.

Overall, the answers to the specific research questions reveal that the Psychiatric Treatment Division employees as a group are not really very dissatisfied with the internal communications situation in the division. However, the results indicate there are four dimensions that definitely need improvement.

Two of these dimensions relate to the communications climate within the division--amount and frequency of communication. Looking at the specific items for the "amount" dimension, the results show that the same employees believe they are not getting "enough information about what is taking place," that they don't have "all the information they want," and the "amount is not sufficient," and that administrators "never want to tell the staff very much."

The specific items for the "frequency" dimension reveal that some division employees believe that administrators should "communicate more frequently," and that there should be "more frequent communication between administrators and staff."

The employee concern with the amount and frequency dimensions of the communication climate is revealed in several of the open-ended comments made by respondents at the end of the measuring instrument. One employee wrote that "administrators are evasive and try hard to hide the information often needed by staff." He indicated that this leads to "rumors, low morale

and negative attitudes." Another employee wrote, "At present we do not have enough communication" from administrators. "When we do, one will say, 'do it this way' and another will say, 'do it another way.' "

The two other problem dimensions, as revealed by the results of the study, are concerned with issues in the environment about which employees believe administrators are not doing a good enough job communicating--change and staff interaction.

Responses to specific items on the "change" dimension show that some employees feel they "never know from one day to the next what changes are going to take place," and that they are "never told how the changes are going to benefit patients." Also, some employees do not believe the administrators do a "good job of informing staff members about reasons for changes in policies and procedures," or that administrators are "interested in staff members becoming aware of new developments in the mental health field."

Many of the open-ended comments reflect the dissatisfaction with the communication about change. One employee wrote, "Better communication is still needed (that provides) reasons for staff and policy changes (and thus) proving that these changes truly change the parties. Then, I feel, the cooperation of all staff would be greatly improved." Another employee wrote, "I truly believe that with policy changes, the administrators should discuss them with the different employees." She adds that often an employee does not know a policy has been changed until "you do a job and someone tells you that you have done it wrong."

As for the "staff interaction" dimension, the results of the analysis of responses for all employees indicates that some employees do not believe that administrators "have made it clear they do not want groups of employees to feel 'isolated.' "

They believe the administration " doesn't encourage communication between professional staff and Mental Health technicians." Furthermore, some employees are not sure the administration "wants groups of staff members to get together and discuss common concerns," nor do they believe that the administration has "discussed any plans with employees for improving the relationships among the different classifications of staff members."

Concerns with staff interaction also showed up in the open-ended comments. One person expressed frustration by writing, "The techs are unable to sit in on meetings and yet they are the ones working directly with the residents--the other staff, social workers, nurses and doctors are included in the meetings." Another staff member wrote, "Communication between unit staff and across division staff is limited."

Following the data analysis to answer the specific research questions for all division employees, additional data analysis was conducted in order to investigate possible differences in perceptions of the internal communications situation held by different groups of employees.

The first of these additional analyses was conducted for professional and non-professional employees. Obviously, there are major differences in education level, job duties and salary between these two groups of employees and the researchers were interested in determining if there are significant differences in communication-related variables as well. Also, in spite of the fact that daily operations returned to normal following the threatened closing of the center, there still was some anxiety among employees because of the realization that state resources are limited and 'next time" the center might be converted into some other facility or phased out all together. Conventional wisdom at the center held that because of the greater chances of professionals for finding

similar jobs in other locations, their anxiety level was lower than that of the non-professionals who have less opportunity to relocate.

Consequently, while no specific hypotheses were formed for testing, the researchers reasoned that the professionals might very well be more "satisfied" with the internal communication situation than the non-professionals who might have a greater perceived "need" for information.

In placing specific job classifications in one category or the other, the researchers used the procedure generally employed at the center. Professionals are considered to be unit coordinators, RN nurses, social workers, psychologists, rehabilitation counselors, activity therapists and mental health specialists (N=32). Non-professionals are considered to be LP nurses, mental health technicians, housekeepers and secretarial staff (N=51).[13]

The results of the analysis for these two groups can be seen in Table 2 and 3. In general, the professional employees are more satisfied with the internal communications situation than the non-professionals. However, there is a significant difference on only four dimensions. Three of these deal with salient issues about which the employees believe administrators should be communicating. The professionals believe that administrators do a better job of communicating about structural issues ($t=1.75$, $df=79$, $p=.04$, one-tailed test), issues relating to staff interaction ($t=2.43$, $df=79$, $p=.008$, one-tailed test), and role-related issues ($t=2.02$, $df=80$, $p=.02$, one tailed test). Also, the professionals believe the administrators do a better job of using meetings as a channel of communication than do the non-professionals ($t=4.96$, $df=75.19$, $p=.000$, one-tailed test). Furthermore, as shown on Table 3, the professionals rate the ward administrator significantly higher in terms of communication performance than do the non-professionals ($t=4.32$, $df=75.90$, $p=.000$, one-tailed test).

For many of the same reasons cited for examining the differences between professionals and non-professionals, the researchers were interested in looking for any differences in the communication perceptions of male and female employees. When the center was being considered as a possible prison facility, it was widely believed that most of the male employees would be able to transfer into the correctional system and that the female employees, as a group, would be most affected by any change in the center. Consequently, it seemed reasonable to speculate that there might be differences between the male (N=24) and female (N=61) employee's perceptions of the communications variables.

As the data in Tables 2 and 3 show, sex does not appear to be related to perceptions of the internal communications situation in the division. There are no significant differences, nor are there any real patterns, in the response of males and females on the 12 dimensions investigated in this study.

In general, the results of this study are validated by the findings of other researchers who have investigated the internal communication in a variety of organizations. Goldhaber et al.[14] offer tentative conclusions drawn from the results of 16 Communication Audits conducted by the Organizational Communication Division of the International Communication Association between 1974 and 1976. The audits were conducted in three health care organizations, five educational organizations, three organizations from private enterprise and five governmental organizations. The total number of respondents for all audits is 3,931.

The results of thd audits, like the results of the study, indicate that employees are not satisfied with amount and frequency of the communication in their organization. Furthermore, employees want to be recipients, rather than senders, of information. It may be that no one ever believes he or she ever has enough information about their organization as often as they want.

However, public relations practitioners, administrators and management should err on the side of too much information too often, rather than too little, too infrequently.

The findings of this study which show that employees are more satisfied with the communication performance of immediate supervisors than they are of administrators higher up the line also are consistent with the findings of the audits. Goldhaber et al. report that the "best sources of information are those closest to employees, and the worst are those farthest away." They add, "the greater the distance between communication sources and receivers in organizations, the less the information received, the less opportunity to request more information, the less follow-up, the poorer the information quality, the greater the use of the grapevine, and the poorer the interpersonal relations."

Conclusion

The results of this examination of the communication climate of the Psychiatric Treatment Division of the Anna Mental Health and Developmental Center, and evaluation of how specific communication roles and functions are being performed in the environment, suggest a number of theoretical, methodological and practical conclusions for public relations practitioners who are working with administrators or management to improve employee relations.

First, it is apparent that it is good to conduct studies like this one because the results often reveal that the internal communication situation is not as bad as a few disgruntled employees would have everyone believe. In the case of the Psychiatric Treatment Division, the administrators called for the study in response to vague complaints that there are "communication problems" in the division. As noted earlier, however, taken as a whole, the employee perceptions of communications variables do not reveal major problems.

The second point, however, is that the results of studies such as this one can help identify specific communication climate factors, salient issues and perceptions of communication performance that need to be improved. In this case, it would be advisable for a public relations practitioner to work with the center administration to improve the employees' perceptions of the amount and frequency of internal communication, communication about issues dealing with change and staff interaction, and the perceived communication performance of the hospital administration.

Third, one of the real advantages of a study such as this is that it can help identify specific groups of employees that may be more dissatisfied than others regarding internal communication. In the Psychiatric Treatment Division, it is the non-professional employees (the largest group) who, in general, are the most dissatisfied.

Fourth, another advantage of studies such as this is that they provide the opportunity to identify things that are being done right. In this case, the employee perceptions of meetings as channels of communication are very good, particularly the perceptions of the professional employees. In spite of the often voiced complaint in many organizations that "we spend too much time in meetings," employees in the Psychiatric Treatment Division believe meetings are very valuable. Also, in spite of the fact that employees do not believe they have enough communication as often as they would like, the communication they do receive from administrators is perceived as generally accurate and important.

The final point that public relations practitioners may want to keep in mind is that the particular combination of organizational communication and basic communication research perspectives used in this study appears to be a valid one for investigating internal communications. Examining the roles and functions of "purposive communicators" within a specific environment is very

useful for identifying aspects of the internal communication program that need to be improved. However, use of this combination of research perspectives should not stop with just identifying the problems. This combination also can be used to develop creative solutions to help improve the organizational communications situation. Hopefully, this is the next step in the Psychiatric Treatment Division of the Anna Mental Health and Developmental Center.

Table 1

Comparison of Sample and Employee Population by Job Classification and Sex*

	Sample Percentage	Employee Population Percentage
Unit Coordinator	4.8	2.7
Nurse (L.P.)	7.2	9.7
Nurse (R.N.)	12.0	10.2
Social Worker	9.6	4.8
Psychologist/Rehab Counselor	2.4	3.2
Technician	42.2	51.6
Housekeeper	1.2	3.2
Activity Therapist	3.6	2.7
Mental Health Specialist	6.0	7.0
Other	10.8	4.8
Male	28.2	32.8
Female	71.8	67.2

Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding error.

*One-sample chi-square tests comparing observed frequencies in the sample to expected frequencies in the sample based on the known percentages in the population reveal no statistically significant differences. For occupational position, $X^2 = 15.54$, df=9; for sex, $X^2 = .79$, df=1.

Table 2

Employee Perceptions of the Communications Climate, Communications About Salient Issues and Communication Channels in the Psychiatric Treatment Division

	All Employees	Professional	Non-Professional	Male	Female
Climate					
Accuracy	3.20	3.25	3.26	3.26	3.22
Amount	2.67	2.83	2.70	2.68	2.71
Frequency	2.49	2.56	2.49	2.52	2.50
Availability	3.12	3.31	3.10	3.14	3.15
Importance	3.20	3.31	3.22	3.16	3.25
Effectiveness	2.96	2.98	3.05	3.15	2.93
Issues					
Change	2.66	2.73	2.72	2.58	2.73
Structure	2.90	3.11*	2.84*	2.90	2.94
Interaction	2.68	2.94**	2.55**	2.74	2.67
Role Confusion	3.13	3.41*	3.00*	3.10	3.13
Channels					
Written	3.26	3.23	3.32	3.38	3.21
Meetings	3.79	4.18***	3.58***	3.79	3.77

Scale: (1) Very Dissatisfied (2) Dissatisfied (3) No Opinion (4) Satisfied (5) Very Satisfied

*$p<.05$ **$p<.01$ ***$p<.001$

Table 3

Employee Perceptions of the Communications Performance of Ward, Division and Hospital Administrators

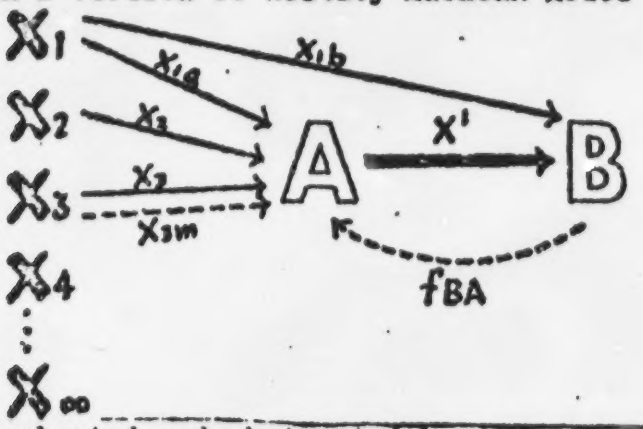
	All Employees	Professional	Non-Professional	Male	Female
Administration					
Ward	3.51	3.90***	3.29***	3.43	3.53
Division	2.92	3.01	2.95	2.97	2.94
Hospital	2.58	2.52	2.67	2.65	2.56

Scale: (1) Very Dissatisfied (2) Dissatisfied (3) No Opinion (4) Satisfied (5) Very Satisfied

***$p < .001$

Figure 1

A-B Version of Westley-MacLean Model



Xs are selected and abstracted by communicator (A) and transmitted as a message (X') to B, who may or may not have part or all of the Xs in his own sensory field (X1b). Either purposively or non-purposively B transmits feedback (fba) to A.

FOOTNOTES

[1]See for example: Scott M. Cutlip and Allen H. Center, Effective Public Relations. 5th Ed., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1977. C. S. Steinberg, "Where Good PR Begins," Public Relations Journal (September 1976) p. 30. James F. Tirone, "Measuring The Bell System's Public Relations," Public Relations Review Vol. III (Winter, 1977) pp. 21-38.

[2]James F. Fox, "Reports to Employees: Bigger, Better and More Often," Public Relations Journal (April 1978) pp. 30-31.

[3]Paul Keckly, "The Increasing Importance of Employee Relations," Public Relations Review Vol. III (Fall, 1977) pp. 70-76

[4]C. G. Smith and J. A. King, Mental Hospitals: A Study in Organizational Effectiveness. Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1975.

[5]James E. Grunig, "Measurement in Public Relations-An Overview," Public Relations Review, Vol. III (Winter, 1977) pp.5-10.

[6]James E. Grunig, "Evaluating Employee Communication in A Research Operation," Public Relations Review, Vol. III (Winter, 1977) pp. 61-82.

[7]Geranld M. Goldhaber, Michael P. Yates, D. Thomas Porter, and Richard Lesniak, "Organizational Communication: 1978," Human Communications Research, Vol. 5 (Fall, 1978) pp. 76-96.

[8]Richard V. Farace, Peter R. Monge and Hamish M. Russell, Communicating and Organizing (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1977.) p. 224.

[9]Goldhaber et al. p. 79.

[10]Bruce H. Westley and Malcolm S. MacLean Jr., "A Conceptual Model for Communications Research," Audio-Visual Communication Review Vol. III (Winter, 1955) pp. 3-12. Also published in Journalism Quarterly, Winter, 1957.

[11]The authors acknowledge the assistance of the following SIU School of Journalism graduate students for their help in pre-testing the instrument: Karen Cogswell, Nora Hall, Robert Joop, Hal Powers, Greg Stanmar, Greg Storey and Sally Taylor.

[12]A complete copy of the measuring instrument is available upon request from the authors.

[13]Breakdown by occupation and sex do not total 92 because of missing data.

[14]Goldhaber et al. pp. 82-83.